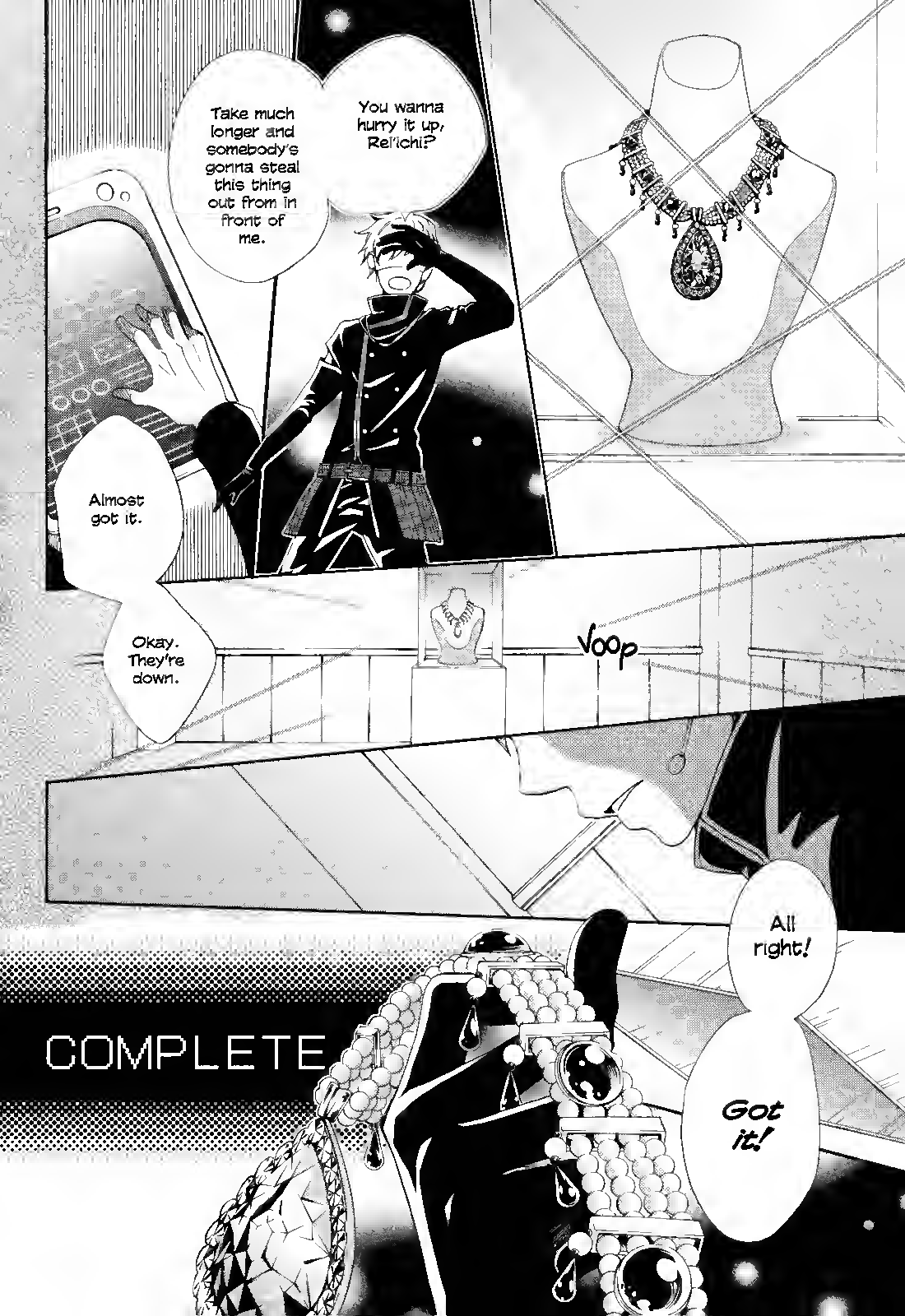
NANAHEI, YOU READY TO GO?
Ready when you are.
ハートスティーラー
Heart Stealer
THE AGE OF CELL PHONE-BASED PLATFORM GAMES IN AN INDUSTRY THAT HAD BEEN STRUGGLING TO REGAIN GROUND AFTER A PERIOD OF STALE TITLES AND STAGNANT SALES.
ONE GAME EMERGED AT THE TOP, SHATTERING RECORDS OVERNIGHT
A GAME
WHERE ONE COULD FLY IN THE NIGHT SKY.
WHERE PLAYERS COULD EXPERIENCE THE THRILL OF GAMING IN A FULL-SENSORY, VIRTUAL SETTING
All right, I'm in.
The place is crawling with motion detectors, though.
Got it.
Taking them offline.


You wanna hurry it up, Re'ichi?
Take much longer and somebody's gonna steal this thing out from in front of me.
Almost got it.
Okay. They're down.
Voop
All right!
Got it!
COMPLETE

RIKACHI

リカチ Fighter

大ボリューム44P!

Mechan ハートスティーラー

Heart Stealer

Speak for yourself.
Well, gee whiz...
You know, I wouldn't be so bushed if I was a Mechanic like you instead of a Fighter, either!
Man, a nap sure sounds good right about now...
What's it say!?
Look. The rankings are in.
Ah.
STEALER
DAILY RANKING
1 BARON
2 GIMMICK
3 LILY GAGA
4 KILLER
5 ROBIN
6 TUBASA
7 MIKUMIKU
8 IKAROS
9 GLIDER

STEALER
DAILYRANKING
9 GLIDER
Are you still playing that stupid game?
Whoa!
We're ranked 9th!? Are you kidding me!? That's awesome!
You think Lily Gaga might challenge us to a duel?
Aw, hell... Chikage.
You're such a kid, Nanahei. Grow up already!
Stealer's not a game for kids, STUPID. It's for adults.
WITH THE CATCH PHRASE,
"EXPERIENCE THE RUSH OF GLIDING THROUGH THE NIGHT SKY,"
THE ONLINE GAME STEALER CAUGHT THE IMAGINATION OF THE PUBLIC AND WAS SOON A HOT TOPIC AMONG PEOPLE OF ALL AGES
AND FOR GOOD REASON

IT'S A GAME WHERE THE PLAYER CAN FEEL AS THOUGH THEY WERE THE MAIN CHARACTER IN AN ACTION MOVIE OR AN ANIME,
WHERE ONE CAN SOAR THROUGH THE SKY, LEAPING FROM BUILDING TO BUILDING IN A SINGLE BOUND.
ACTIONS MADE REALITY THROUGH THE PLAYERS' OWN SENSES.
A GAME OF THIEVES.
Sure, there's a sizeable investment involved, but trust me. It's worth it.
THE GAME PERIPHERALS CONSIST OF A HEADSET DEVICE (THE SCREEN IS PROJECTED ON THE VISOR) AND GLOVE SETS FOR BOTH THE HANDS AND FEET WHICH TRANSMIT THE PLAYERS MOTIONS AND ALLOWS THEM TO EXPERIENCE THE GAME EXPERIENCE ON A SENSORY LEVEL,
AS WELL AS A DEDICATED GAME CONTROLLER

IT'S DUMB, THAT'S WHAT IT IS!
You might be top in this stupid game world of yours,
but you're close to dead last in the real one.
Heck, Glider -- That's our team-- is ranked in the top 20 of the entire country!
Besides, me and Rei'ichi make a great team. He's the brains, so he's the Mechanic, and I'm the brawn, so I'm the Fighter.
Anyway, I didn't chase you down to talk about that.
You're taking care of library clean-up today, and I won't hear another word about it!
BY YOUR-SELF!
Tch.
So much for being a bro, Rei'ichi.
I'm not helping.
BY MYSELF!? DUDE! ASSIST!
DU~UDE!

Why's he gotta give me the cold treatment like that? Doesn't camaraderie count for anything anymore?
STEALER
DAILY RANKING
1 BARON
2 GIMMICK
3 LILY GAGA
4 KILLER
5 ROBIN
6 TUBASA
7 MIKUNIKU
8 IKAROS
9 GLIDER

Hey, do you play Stealer?
!!
JUMP!
Sorry, I didn't mean to freak you out, or anything...
It's just, y'know, I play it, too.
Which team are you on?
Shake
Shake
Watch out for the-!
shelf
Are you all—
FWIP
WONK
No running in the library!
Eep!
VROOM
UH
WOW. WHAT A KLUTZ.
You think maybe she was a newbie, or something?
I mean, she took off as soon as I started talking about team rankings.

Which I don't blame her for one bit, by the way.
Like a newb would care about rankings!
She ran off because some creep got in her face wanting to talk about video games.
Anyway, forget the girl.
I programmed a new item into your arsenal.
It's equipped with the ability to scale down the items in your inventory.
Whoa...
You're so good at this stuff.
Good thing I'm on your team.
Are you trying to get me to marry you? 'Cause I totally will.
Dude, I just proposed to you, and you're blowing me off?
You know I can't move the way you do. It's just a matter of matching the right guy to the right position!
JUST PUT THE DAMN HELMET ON.
Aww, you're ignoring me.
Alright, alright. I get it.

LOG IN

I can never get over how real this whole virtual thing feels, you know?
No wonder adults get hooked on this game, too.
I'm picking up readings from ten different groups in the area.
We need to score this treasure before any of them, or our ranking's going to take a hit.
Same game-plan as always, Nanahei. I'll stick back here and feed you instructions. Just do what I tell you, got it?
Loud and clear!
Well, well, *well*. If it isn't team *Glider*.

Not tonight, Nana-chan. Wish I could, but I've got a *prior engagement*...
Oh, Team Ikaros... How you doin', guys?
Come to challenge us to a duel?
AWW, MAN. I HATE THIS GUY.
See, we've been challenged to a duel by Lily Gaga herself.
Are you serious!?
Why you guys!?
Wish I could stick around, but we've got important things to take care of. You know how it is.
Catch you later, Nana-chan.
What the hell!?
He showed up just to rub it in our faces!
Come on, "*Nana-chan*." We've got work to do, too.
PAT

Keep ranking us up and you'll get your chance, sooner or later.
Maybe Lily's hanging out around here. You think?
Man, I wanna get a look at her.
IN THIS GAME,
THERE ARE PLAYERS WHO CHOOSE, FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER, NOT TO JOIN A TEAM. (THOUGH GENERALLY SPEAKING, FORMING A TEAM TENDS TO MAKE THINGS EASIER.)
"BARON," RANKED FIRST.
"GIMMICK," RANKED SECOND.
AND "LILY GAGA," THE ONLY FEMALE STEALER, RANKED THIRD.

You're heavy.
And if I were you, I'd be more concerned about wrapping up this job. Unless, of course, you have something against sleeping.
Man, I know we've gotta be around the right level. How come we haven't gotten one yet?
Duly noted, sir.
LILY, IN PARTICULAR IS FAMOUS FOR HER LOVE FOR BATTLE.
AND IT'S CUSTOMARY FOR HER TO SEND CHALLENGES TO ONLY THE STRONGEST NEW PLAYERS.
Awright.
Time to steal some treasure.
First, let's secure our entry.
We'll hit the treasure in the building in the 14th block to start with.
That one over there? Got it.

That's gotta be it.
The sensors?
Already offline.
All right. That's one down!
Releasing door lock.
Got it. I'll be careful.
Police trap down to the left.

That's gotta be it.
The sensors?
Already offline.
All right. That's one down!
Releasing door lock.
Got it. I'll be careful.
Police trap down to the left.

Next is...
Well, 12th block's probably our closest bet, if you ask me
Another team's already got it camped.
We want to avoid any battles,
so let's hit the 18th, instead.
Gotcha.

Ah. There's more treasure on the other floor.
I'll set up a trap over here so we don't get interrupted by any other teams.
Cool. Be right back with the goods.
Hard to say. Ikaros and Lily are somewhere around here too, remember...
One more hit and we've got this in the bag, huh?
How are you feeling about our time? Think we'll be in the top five?
EASY MONEY, BABY!
CRASH...

She was *hot*... At least, I *think* she was?
!...

I'm serious, man. She was *smokin'*. The *things* I'd do to get a better look at her!
You're attracted to an image manipulated by items and programming code. Your parents must be so proud.
You jelly?
Of who!?
NANAHE!!
QUIT FLIRTING AND START PUTTING BOOKS AWAY!
SAVE ME, REI'ICHI-KUN!
GET OFF ME!
GO! AWAY! NOW!
yeah, yeah...
AH.
IT'S HER...
Sorry for scaring you yesterday.
JUMP!

It's cool, I'm harmless. I'm not trying to pick up on you, or anything.
It's just, I play Stealer, and I was wondering if maybe you played it too? Or are you just looking into it, or something?
.....
.....
Are you strong?
Huh?
Uh, well... Yeah, we're pretty good.
If you've ever seen Glider on the charts, that's us. We've been going up late!—
Hmph. I see.
Bye.
Wait! The—

Book... shelf...
!!
WHUD!
DASH!
I'm running in the hallway!
TRIP
.....
STRIKE TWO...
I just can't leave her alone.
I can't figure out if she's doing it on purpose or if she's seriously that much of a ditz.
Anyway, look what just came in.
STEALER
DUEL
challenge
LILY GAGA
How do you keep breathing?
Hey, you think this is a flag? Like, a love-flag? Can I be in love with her?

NO WAY!

This is our target: The S-Rank treasure, "Wings of Diablos."
The win goes to whoever grabs it and hits the "Complete" button first.
We'll keep you equipped for speed, this time.
That should help avoid any battes.
Got it.

I'm trusting you to watch my back,
partner.
The match starts at 11:00PM sharp.
MISSION START

This is bad. Lily's going to get there before us...
FASTER, NANAHEI!
I know, I know! I'm going as fast as I can!
Well, only one thing we can do. I'll have to set up some traps...
BEEP
POLICE
ONE OF THE MANY BENEFITS TO PLAYING ON A TEAM...
TROMP
TROMP
TROMP
Alright, she's cornered.
Now's your chance. Move!
PEEP!

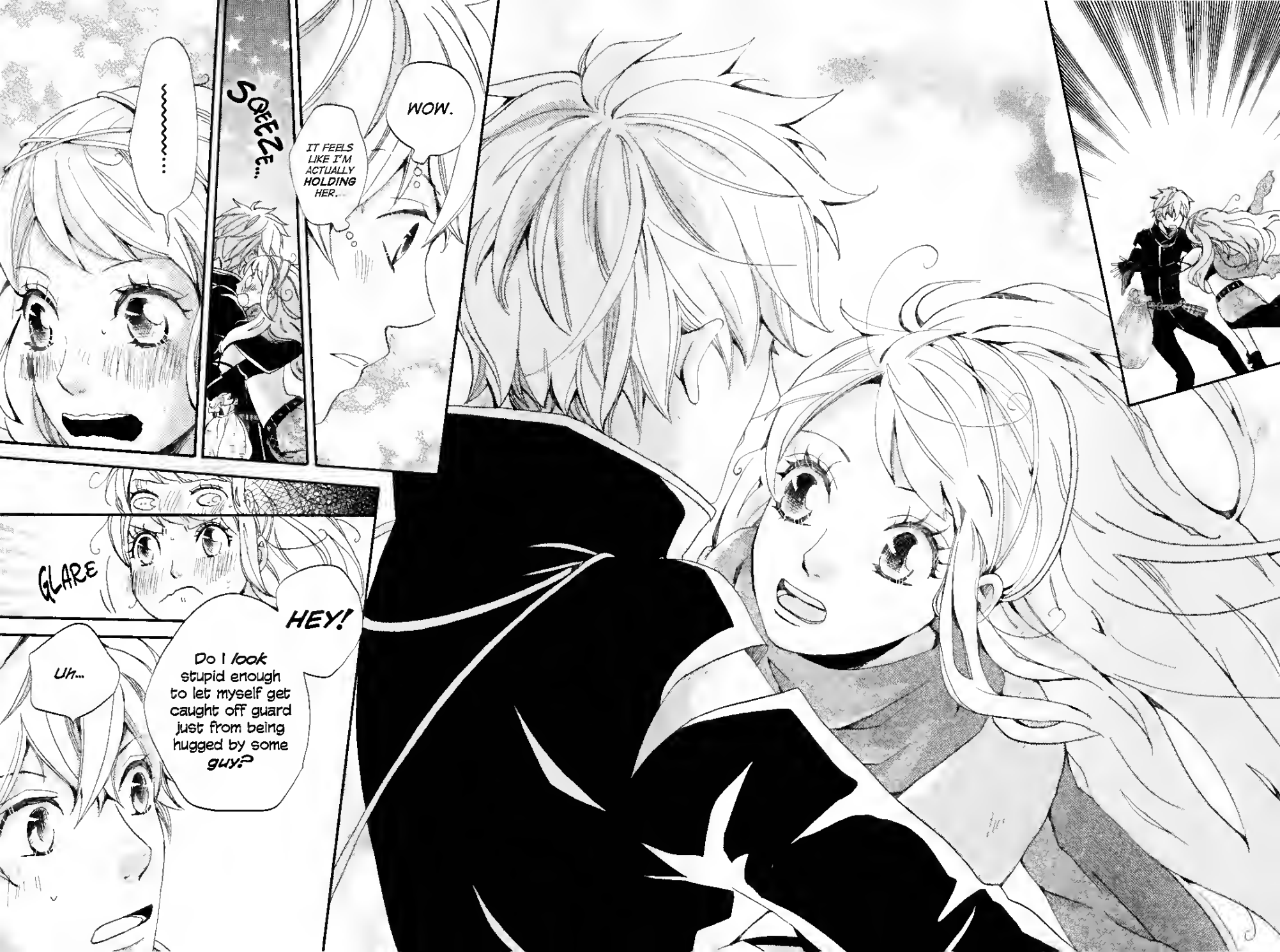
I KNEW I COULD COUNT ON YOU! ♡
Yeah, well, that trap item cost me 10,000 Gold.
Three months' worth of savings
OH MY GAWWWD!
Whup.
KUP!
Okay, I'm in.
No sign of Lily so far.

PSHOO!
THERE IT IS...!
All right! Got it.
You're not half bad!

But not good enough.
The treasure's *mine*.
...Do you have any idea how *nasty* you look right now?
B-BECAUSE OF YOUR STUPID TRAP, YEAH!!
Whatever! I'm taking the treasure from you.
WHOA!
BATTLE MODE ON

Hey!
WHAK
Oh jeeze... Oh, man...! I haven't gone into battle mode in forever!
I know, I know! But--
NANAHE!, WHAT ARE YOU DOING!? SPEED EQUIPMENT ONLY WORKS BECAUSE IT SACRIFICES DEFENSE FOR MOBILITY! TAKE HER DOWN!
But she's a girl, dude! I can't hit a girl! Not even in a computer game!
I'm gonna try to outrun her!
BAM

Ohhh maaan
BANG
Keep running from a battle...
and you'll start losing points, you know.
So what? You think you're doing me some kind of favor!?
It doesn't matter if I'm a—
STUB
AH!
Uh.
Yeah, but you're a girl! I'm not gonna fight a—


WOW.
IT FEELS LIKE I'M ACTUALLY HOLDING HER...
SQEEZE...
.....
HEY!
Do I look stupid enough to let myself get caught off guard just from being hugged by some guy?
GLARE
Uh...

W-
Well, to~o~o ba~a~ad!
WHIP!
The joke's on you, cherry boy!
Ah!
...Shoot.
Bye-bye.

Nanahei!
She took it... Oh, man, did she take it.
She stole it!?
She stole it, alright.

What? So... She didn't steal it.
The trea- sure.
Oh, here.
Yeah...
BOING
Aww, all she took was the dummy.
It's a fake!
If you're going to talk in your sleep,
then wait until you're asleep to do it.
Ah... So you only pretended to put it in the bag...
You pain in the ass.
It's like, I don't know,
she stole my heart?
She pretends to be cool, but at heart she's just an innocent girl...
MISSION COMPLETE

Seriously? Who was it? Who beat her?
Wow, Lily Gaga lost?
"Glider."
Haww
I'm ti~i~ired.
Well, it was a rough night.
Look.
Our rank went up.
Oooh!
BARON
2 GIMMICK
3 GLIDER
4 LILY GA
5 ROBIN

There you are, Nanahei!
You skipped out on library duty again yesterday!
As long as you limit it to internet popularity, sure.
Uh-oh.
What?
Holy crap.
Does this mean we're famous?
There's always Baron and Gimmick, too...
You think they're going to challenge us after this?
It's the pain in the ass!
Run for it!
Hey! Get back heeere!
I wish she'd cut me a break. I'm still tired from playing Stealer all night.
THUD
SLIP
Ah.

.....
MGH!
WA-
WA-!
SHOVE
WHOA!
TMP
Ah-hah!
Now I get it.
!

Get what?
Nothing... Just a little thing called love, broski.
Hm Hm
And like I've told you before, save the sleep-talk for when you're sleeping, "Nana-chan."
Aw, don't give me that look, Rei'ichi-kun. You know you're the only GUY I'll ever love, right?
Ouch.
We got another challenge from Lily.
Guess that loss last night really burned her...
Ah
STEALER
I'LL TAKE YOUR CHALLENGE.
ANYTIME. ANYWHERE.

WHILE SOUNDING EACH OTHER OUT,
WHILE STEALING AND BEING STOLEN FROM ALIKE,
Looks like tonight...
WE'LL SEND THESE FEELINGS SOARING THROUGH THE MOONLIT SKY.
...We'll be doing some gliding.

Heart Stealer

by Rikachi (Oneshot)

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